

**From:** John McLeod  
**To:** 'Microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'  
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The proposed settlement from Microsoft seems more like an ingenious marketing plan than a punishment. With this plan, they are allowed to invest in a market (Education) to guarantee later sales. This is no more than a company giving a customer a free razor, knowing full well that he can only buy the blades from them. By pushing more Microsoft desktop and server products in, it forces the schools to move farther away from Microsoft's competitors (Primarily Apple, Linux and Netware). As part of my job, I administer PC's, Macs and Servers. Whether it's Licensing, maintenance or day to day operation and administration, Microsoft based units cost us more and are more difficult and more expensive to maintain. All types of computers break or have problems, regardless of brand. The difference is, what does it take to fix or maintain them. With Microsoft based operating systems, Maintenance and Repairs are normally done by a larger IT Staff instead of the user or teacher. This is because an average user will never have the knowledge to perform the troubleshooting required. This settlement may cost the schools much more in maintenance and upgrades down the road than they could ever budget. This is coupled with the fact that Microsoft is constantly pushing its users to upgrade for the sole reason that maybe the new system will actually work. How many upgrades will schools (and their taxpayers) have to suffer through before they have stable system in the classroom? No one will ever know. It's never happened before with a Microsoft-based network.

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